NEGLECT of SUPPORTING AND MAINTAINING THE PURE Worship of God,

By the Professing People of God: is a God-provoking and Land-Wasting Sin.

And REPENTANCE with REFORMATION of it, the only way to their OUTWARD FELICITY:

OR,

The Cause of NEW-ENGLANDS *SCARCITY: And right way to its*

PLENTY:

As it was Discovered and Applied in a Sermon Preached at *Roxbury* on a Fast-Day: *July* 26. 1687.

By *James Allen*, Teacher to the first Gathered Church in *Boston*.

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TO THE

CHRISTIAN READER

THis Sermon was Preached on a Solemn Faſt-Day, occaſioned by the afflictive Providence of God in ſending Worms and Caterpillars which in ſome places, as Gods great Army, marched in numerous Companies, and devoured all before them, both Corn and Graſs which Awakened ſome of the People of God to ſeek the Lord by Faſting and Prayer: and Roxbury among others appointed ſuch a Day, to the keeping on which Service the unworthy Author being called, and in preparation to it more than ordinarily preſt in Spirit with the Subject they handled. And being unuſual and new, might be the more affecting to ſome, but the ſeaſonableneſs, and neceſſity of ſuch a truth to be improved among ſuch People who have degenerated greatly into this Sin of Suffering the Houſe of God to lie waſte, undervaluing the Pure Inſtitutions of Jeſus Chriſt, denying or witholding Gods due for the upholding of them; together with the Importunity of ſome occaſioned the publiſhing of it. A Sin the Lord hath been many years teſtifying againſt by his Providence, in Blaſtings and Mildows, and other waſting Judgments, and now by theſe Devourers. The Reverend Elders in the Country have been ſlow of bearing Miniſterial Teſtimony againſt it, leaſt it ſhould be prejudicial to their Miniſtry, among ſuch who are more ready to be angry with their Reprovers than their Sin: It was needful ſome ſhould do it, and having ſuch an occaſion, and unwonted awakening Providence, being alſo ſtirred in my

Spirit

Spirit to bear this Testimony, I have endeavoured by clear Scripture Evidence to evince the Truth of it, and bring it home to this people; if the Lord will set in with it, and make it a convincing and humbling word, this sin may be seen and Reformed, and first Love to the House of God, & his Pure Institutions be recovered: I doubt not but then the Lord will be with us as with our Fathers, and will not leave nor forsake us nor ours; But incline our hearts and yours to his Service, *that this People may be blessed to a* Proverb, *and all Nations may call them so.*

Which is the Hearty prayer of

Your Soul Friend and
Well-Wisher.
James Allen.

Malachi

Neglect of Suppporting and Maintaining the Pure

VVORSHIP OF GOD. &c.

Malachi III verſe 9, 10, 11, 12.

9 *Ye are curſed with a Curſe: for ye have robbed me, even this whole Nation.*

10 *Bring ye all the Tithes into the Store-houſe, that there may be meat in mine houſe, and prove me now herewith, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a bleſſing that there ſhall not be room enough to receive it.*

11 *And I will rebuke the Devourer for your ſakes: and he ſhall not deſtroy the fruits of your ground, neither ſhall your vine caſt her fruit before the time in the field, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.*

12 *And all nations ſhall call you bleſſed: for ye ſhall be a delightſome land ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.*

THis Prophet was the laſt in the Old Teſtament, his name ſignifies Angel, there be ſome Conjecture he was ſo and Aſſumed a Body, others that it was *Erra*, and this name oſtends his Office, and his faithful diſcharge of it, when the Prieſts ſo generally declined, *chap.* 2. 7. He was indeed a Meſſenger of the Lord.

But he ſems to be after that time, and in whom Propheſies with them did ceaſe, a perſon eminently and extraordinarily raiſed.

1. To reprove the prevailing Evils of the Church of God (that was delivered from *Babiloniſh* Captivity ; their Temple Erected and Liberty of Worſhipping God accordiug to his VVill Indulged, but were ſadly degenerated in his time, *chap.* 1*ſt.* and 2*d.*

2. To foretel the ſpeedy and ſudden coming of the Meſſiah, in ſuch a way as they did not expect, *chap.* 3. and *chap.* 4. and ſo to ſtir them up to Repentance of thoſe Evils, they thereby might be prepared for it in this third chapter.

1. We have the Propheſie of Chriſts firſt coming in the fleſh, verſe 1. to 7.

2 Reproof of the ſins of this people, with Exhortation to Repentance, *verſe* 7. to 13.

3 Threatning of the Obſtinate which he deſcribes, *verſ.* 13. to 16,

4 Encouragement to the Pious, *v.* 16. to the end.

1 The foretelling Chriſts Coming, which he uſhers in with a note of Attention and Admiration! Behold!

1 By telling his Forerunner to prepare his way.

2 The Lord himſelf coming, and that ſuddenly and certainly, who is deſcribed here by his Divine Nature, the Lord; his Office and alſo Humane Nature, the Meſſenger of the Covenant; or rather his Humane Nature is ſignified by his Coming, which would be according to the Promiſe of the Seed of *Abraham*: This was that they fought and delighted in according to their carnal apprehenſions of it.

3 The terribleneſs of his coming,

1 To the good as purifying fire, yet for their benefit, *v.* 2, 3, 4

2 To the VVicked it will be a Day of Judgment, *v* 5 a deſtruction of them, and the Jewiſh Church State which was to that time continued upon account of Gods unchangeableneſs in his Covenant to that People, till the Promiſed Seed was come, *v* 6

2 The Reproof of this People for the ſin that was the cauſe of their preſent Judgments, Gods ſending Devourers to deſtroy the fruits of the Earth, and that which did unfit them for that time of Chriſts Coming, with Exhortation to a through Repentance of it, *v* 7 to 13 the ſins he chargeth them with.

1 Their Impenitence under former Warnings, and Convictions of this

this Evil, *v.* 7. a ſin that they had long continued in; this was aggravated thereby.

2 That which is the very ſin Which had been the cauſe of former Judgments of this kind, and that at preſent they were under; it is Sacriledg, *v* 8 to 10.

And Secondly Exhortation to Repentance, with Arguments to enforce it, *v* 10 to 13.

1 The ſin charged in the evil nature of it, *v* 8 which he convinceth them of by appealing to Conſcience to judge according to the light of nature, with an Anſwer to their Enquiry wherein they have done it.

2 The evil effect of it, the Curſe upon your outward bleſſings, which it is a cauſe of, and when the Judgment is general, the ſin is ſo, *v* 9.

2 The Exhortation to Repentance, *v* 10 to 13 with directions to the duty, is to be done, and Motives to the doing it, which we ſhall open and improve in the Uſe.

The Ceneral Doctrine hence is,

Doctrine, *True and General Repentance is the only remedy of publick Judgments upon a Profeſſing people, or the only way to Remove them.*

Q 1. *What is this true Repentance?*

Q 2 *When it is, and why it muſt be general?*

Q 3 *How this appears to be the only and ſure Remedy of publick Judgments.*

Q 1 *What is this true Repentance?*

Anſwer, It conſiſts in theſe three things,

1 It lies in a through Conviction of ſin, eſpecially that Evil whereby the Lord is moſt provoked.

1 Sin is the cause of all publick Judgments, *Isa* 59. 1, 2. It is true in personal afflictions, the Lord sometimes useth Soveraignty, and may do it for trial and many other holy ends, as in *Job*, *Haman*, *&c.* but when upon a people it is always for sin. The Reason is, because outward mercies and Judgments are the proper rewards and punishments of a people as visible.

2 It is some special sin of a people the Lord is most provoked with when he sends his Judgments upon a people, the Lord is a God of Judgment, *by him Actions are weighed*, 2 *Sam.* 2 3. And there are some sins cast the scale for some particular judgments, see *Amos* 1. 3. 6. *chap.* 2 4, 6.

2 This sin must be known, as there can be no Repentance *without* Conviction, so where it is only of generals, that is not true: there is some special sin end of a person that is leading & ruling so among a people, this must be known in order to the Confession and Reformation of it as evident by the enquiry, *v* 8. and the Prophets reply to it, and by the charge the Lord gives about it, *Josh.* 7. 11. 12

Two things necessary to be known here.

1 The evil in the nature of it, *v* 8. Offence against God, and that of an heinous nature; it is a robbing of him, taking away by force.

2 In the effects, the mischief it brings, its that curseth all your blessings, and that upon a whole Nation, by Gods violent taking away that which they had, fair hopes and expectation to have enjoyed, which they are to look upon as the fruits of the Curse for this sin: It is Gods seizing that which your sin had forfeited into his hand.

2 Another part of true Repentance is deep humiliation, as for all, so especially for this sin, which though it is not so plainly expresst, yet it is fully implied in the *Text*; for there will be no thorough Reformation when there is not a heart separated from it, Which is in this way.

This lies in these three things.

1 An humble and penitent Confession of it, *Psalm* 51. 4. In self-condemning, and justifying God in all his Proceedings with you,

upon

upon the provocation given, ſo great a part this is that it is ſometime put for the whole, *Jer.* 3: 13. 1 *Joh.* 1. 9. It being the moſt difficult where it is ſincere, and will certainly be attended with the reſt.

2 *Inward ſhame and confuſion*, Ezra 9 4. Jer. 3. 22. Rom. 6. 21 *it ſpeaks the ſinner duly affected with the offence to God, and miſchief to himſelf.*

3 *Diſlike and hatred of it, your ſelf aborrence*, Job 42 6, 7. Iſai. 64 6 *this is called the knowing the plague of the heart.* 1 Kings 8. 38, 39.

1 *Knows it to be a plague, his ſickneſs.*

2 *Deadly one is at the heart, without he have Divine Relief.*

3 *At his heart; this is one caſe you muſt needs confeſs and open unto the Phiſitian of Souls, and feel it, and cannot but bewayl and abhor it. It is alſo an accepting the puniſhment of his iniquity*, Lev. 26. 41.

3 Reformation, *Prov* 28. 13. doing contrary, *Mal.* 3 *verſe* 10. *Iſai.* 1 21

Q. 2 Why this muſt be general?

Anſw. 1 *The Judgment is general, verſe* 9 *this whole Nation therefore Repentance muſt: for when Judgment is general, ſin is publick; Judgment declareth the provocation to be ſo, not that every particular perſon is guilty, there be many Holy Ones there among people that yet ma ſuffer with them that are not perſonally guilty, yet involved in the affliction and common calamity: ſo if the Relenting and Reforming part be the Ruling Part, a leſſer number will not hinder the bleſſing, nor will ſome few, though eminent prevail to remove ſuch publick afflictions; many times where it is not generally ſeen and bewailed though they may obtain ſome peculiar favours to themſelves*, yet not for the whole, *Ezek.* 14 13, 14 *Jon* 3 8

Q. 3 Why this is the ſure and only Remedy.

Anſw *That it is ſo is ſo fully atteſted in Scripture, and made good by Providence, and a ſubject you are ſo well acquainted with that I ſhall not inſiſt upon it.*

1 But that it is a ſure way will appear,

1 In that God hath preſcribed it as the remedy; and promiſed that it ſhall be ſo, *Mal.* 3. 7.

2 When the very Judgments have been threatned in ſevereſt manner, it is with this exception, *Jer.* 18. 7, 8 *Jon.* 3. 10.

3 Yea when he hath begun to execute, it hath been effectual to remove them, 2 *Chron.* 12. 4, 5, 6, 7 *Amos* 7. 1, 2, 3.

2 And the only.

Reaſon 1.

Becauſe this is the only Remover of the cauſe of the controverſie; ſuch Judgments are effects of Gods diſpleaſure, which is not againſt his creature but the Sinner, Lam. 3. 33. *Mat.* 5. 25. *Creatures come to execute the curſe upon a People of Gods Wrath, but where true Repentance, they are not the Subjects it unvalidates their Commiſſion, diſarms them, his condition is changed where ſuch a changed diſpoſition is, Jer* 50 20.

2 It is a duty highly pleaſing to God, its new Covenant Obedience, *Jer.* 31. 19, 20. *Lev.* 26. 41.

Improvement of this Truth is my main deſign, and I ſhall follow the method of the Prophet in it, my whole Text being an Exhortation to Repentance of this evil eſpecially, urged by cogent Arguments, and furthered by ſuitable Advice and Counſel; which alſo gives us ſufficient ground of Conviction and Humiliation.

The Uſes then ſhall be,

1 Of Conviction and Humiliation;

2 Of Exhortation;

USE

USE I.

Of Conviction and Humiliation which is the main work of such a day as this, and that such Providences call for, and must proceed, for there will never be through Reformation without deep Humiliation; This is that we acknowledg, and do openly profess before God to intend in Fasting Days, otherwise they will not be Days of Atonement but of provocation, Lev. 23. 27, 29. *our business with God, under testimonies of his displeasure, is Atonement, our peace with God through the blood of Jesus Christ, the way to which is sence of sin, and the need of pardon.*

Two things are requisite in order to this:

1 Enquiry into the cause of the Judgment, or to find out sin, that sin that God is most displeased with.

2 A search into our own hearts, whether we are the persons under the guilt of it, *Lam* 3. 40.

1 The first of these is that *I* shall endeavour to further you in, this being a great part of Ministerial work in such a day, *Isa* 58 1 To tell the people of their sins; as it is every christians to enquire of the Lord to show him his sin, *Job* 10. 2 *Job* 34. 32 searching out of sin is the great duty in days of affliction, and in that search, its the christians duty.

1 To acknowledg their own ignorance and darkness about sin, and especially those God is chastening for, the best may be ignorant, and the humble Soul sees it.

2 To desire Gods teaching:

1 By his Word, that is the ordinary and visible way of Gods teaching in an Ordinance, 2 *Sam.* 21. 1.

David did by the *Ephod* enquire for this teaching, *Psal.* 22. 4 enquire in the Temple, *Mal.* 2. 7. he is the Messenger of the Lord, enquire at his mouth.

2 By his Providence, that also is a way of Gods teaching.

3 But especially by his Spirit, *Isa* 14 26 2 *Cor* 3 6 *in the word* to give full and an humbling sight of it, that the Spirit only can

do

do, and when he doth it, its ordinarily by the Miniſtry of the Word, he brings it home, and carries it to the heart, and ſets the ſoul upon its own ſearching, and bringing it ſelf to the ſearching of the Word.

To help on this work, we have a plain diſcovery in my Text.

1 *What is that Sin which provokes the Lord, to inflict ſuch Judgments as we are now under, why he ſends Devourers to lay your fields waſte? It is becauſe the Houſe of God lies waſte, it is the neglect of upholding and maintaining Gods Holy Inſtitutions, and the Ordinances of his Houſe*, verſe 7 Hag 1 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 *Set your heart to your ways, be humbled for that ſin that is the cauſe of your ſcarcity, and curſe in your enjoyments, viz the Houſe of God lies waſte.*

Two evils the Lord is very angry with his people for, with reſpect to his right in mens Eſtates

1 Their laying it out upon Falſe-worſhip, *Hoſ* 2 8

2 Denying it, or witholding that which is his due to his own Worſhip that is charged here.

Q But what is Gods due, is there any ſuch thing in New-Teſtament Times.

Anſw *To avoid all Controverſie, I ſhall not meddle with the meaſure and way: but clear by the New-Teſtament, that there is a due, & that which God requires by the rule of Juſtice to be given*

1 *Cor* 9 13. 14 The Morality of that appointment is perpetual, that thoſe that ſerve in the Houſe ſhould be maintained in that ſervice, as by attending the Altar, ſo in Preaching the Goſpel; now they ſhould live of it, have their outward ſuſtentation by thoſe to whom they Miniſter, *Mat* 10 30 there the Lord hath ſaid it, and put it under a rule of Juſtice as due to that Service, *Gal* 6 6, 7 it is to be from all good things, thoſe that here do partake in them ſelves, and from all that have any thing of their own, 1 *Cor* 16 2 *In proportion to any mans increaſe*, 1 tim 5 17 muſt be that is honourable and becoming ſuch a Service, and may teſtifie that you do eſteem of it.

1 God hath a right in every mans Eſtate, which is given to Je-

ſus

ſus Chriſt, and by him to his Officers, *Pſal* 16 3 He did reſerve ſuch an acknowledgment of his Soveraignty in *Eden*, one of the trees were his propriety, and forbiden to be medled with upon the higheſt penalty.

2 *The further diſcovery my Text gives for your Conviction and Humiliation, is that it is a very heinous ſin.*

1 *Its a robbing of God, a ſin of the higheſt injuſtice, a Theft, yea a Violence & Fraud againſt the firſt Table, where God is more immediately injured; which is called Sacriledg, Prov* 20 25 *its a ſnare a ſin that entangles him, and holds him under the guilt of it, Prov* 5 22

2 *Its* againſt the light of nature, will a man that acts like *a man* in free uſe of his reaſon do thus? ſins againſt the light of nature, are very great, eſpecially in them advantaged with Goſpel light, that which Heathens acting by the ſight of nature will not do, ſo the Lord exagerates the ſin of *Iſrael*, *Jer* 2 10, 11 is then ſuch a thing; will the Nations change their God, which are now, yet *Iſrael* hath changed their glory when they forſake his true Worſhip, ſo it is in the undervaluing of it.

1 *Nature dictates there is a God, Rom* 1 20.

2 *This God is to be worſhipped, Acts* 17 23 *whom they worſhip ignorantly, they did worſhip, though ignorant what God was.*

3 That this worſhip be maintained and that honourably, and therefore though Heathens were miſtaken about the object of worſhip and means, yet what they did think to be; ſo they by the light of nature were ſtirred up to a liberal ſupport of it, *Iſa* 46 10 laviſh gold out of the bag; and what a tumult was there in *Epheſus*, *Acts* 19 24 when they feared their worſhip ſhould be ſet at nought.

So it is with Superſtitious Perſons that are wrong in the means of Worſhip, though right in the object, Exod 32 3 *part with their Jewels to the worſhip of Jehovah by a Calf*, Judg 17 3 *This ſin then is worſe then the Heathens that have not extinguiſhed the exerciſe of natural light to deſpiſe Gods own Inſtitutions that have them, and then thoſe that are ſuperſtitious in this thing*, Heb 12 15 Eſau *is called*

led a Prophane Person, that despised his birth-right, that is such an one that sober Heathen did Excommunicate *from their Communion in their Worship.* Procul hinc estote prophani.

3 The greatness of this sin appears in this, that its from an evil root, an heart of unbelief, *Heb* 3 12 where there is a forsaking God, and undervaluing him, and overvaluing the Creature, *Jer* 2 12, 13 God and Christ are despised, in contempt cast upon his Ordinances.

4 *It is the cause of great and sore Judgments, this is or should be a sencible evidense; its that brings the Curse of God upon all your blessings? as here you are cursed with a Curse, that blasts your fairest hopes of increase, the Lord sends his Devourets to take it away in the season of it: That God who hath blessed your Fathers, and taken your Children into a blessing Covenant; this sin marrs all, and provokes him to curse your blessings,* Jer 5 24 *It is your sin witholds good things from you,* Deut 29 24, 25 *and make you a reproach and miserable to a Proverb.*

5 It opens the door to all other evils, even spiritual judgments which are the sorest, 2 *Thes* 2 12 because they love not the truth, so if you love not Gods Holy and Pure Institutions, you may be given up to receive mens inventions & temporal evils, *Neh* 13.6,7, 8, 9, 10. where there was neglect of bringing the Tithes into Gods House, those empty chambers were fit to be prepared for *Tobiah* and his Goods, Be convinced its a grievous sin and justly provoking to God, yea to such an heat of his anger; and labour to quench it with faith in the blood of Christ, the fruit where of may appear in the tears of true Repentance.

3 *That which may further lay this sin before you is, that the professing People of God under the highest and purest Profession of Religion, are most Prone to it, and this evil they are more fearfully under the guilt of, and it is charged upon Israel, when under greatest Reformation, as here after their coming out of Babilon, and when the Altar of God was set upon its Basis, and they had been Purged from their Whoredoms, and Idolatry in false means of Worship, that they did abhor*

hor it, that which was not found among them when Idolaters, the abuſe of Gods Portion was not by their uſing it themſelves, or withholding it from the Lord, but beſtowing it on falſe Worſhip.

Luther when he read theſe Scriptures, urging the care of the Miniſtry, thought there had been no need of it, he found people rather to exceed when he was a Monk in maintaining Shrines to *Diana*, but when he was a Preacher of the Goſpel, he profeſſed he ſaw need of all that was ſaid, and that contempt of the Goſpel brought theſe ſore judgments after his time, which he did fore tel would befal them upon that account.

Reaſon: *And the Reaſon is, becauſe true Worſhip is Spiritual and ſupernatural, and croſs to corrupt nature, whereas mens inventions are ſuited to it; hence where men are not truly converted and ſpiritual, they ſee no beauty in them at all, where they do keep up outward viſible Ordinances, they will do no more than that they may keep up the credit of ſuch a Profeſſion.*

And where they are ſpiritual, its but in part, and unleſs it be in Eminency, it will grow remiſs here, where any declining in the power of Religion, there is no love and eſteem of Ordinances, as may be ſeen and found by ſad experience in *New-England* Children; who do not riſe up in the ſame ſpirit with their Godly and Eminent Predeceſſors, the firſt Planters in this Country, who like *Jeremiah* in the Wilderneſs, when newly freed from *Egyptian*-bondage, and had ſet up the Worſhip of God, and when ſo hee to the Tabernacle, that they needed a Proclamation to reſtrain them, *Exod:* 36. 5. But as Love to God hath declined, ſo hath this to his Houſe.

The Errand into this Wilderneſs was for Purity of Worſhip, the Lord was highly pleaſed with it, it was a Love of Eſpouſals: but behold what degeneracy, many can be content to live without them, thoſe under them at great indifferency about them. Let this be an awakening word, bring your hearts to the Bar of it, for Conviction and Humiliation. The Lord may be at peace with you, and ſo Good may come to you.

U S E II. Of Exhortation.

To ſtir you up to a Reformation herein,

Two things wherein this will lie: As,

1. In giving your ſelves up to God, and ſo to his people, 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. when he had commended their liberality, he tells you the beginning of it, it was in giving themſelves to God, and to his people according to his Will; all our offerings to God will not avail without this.

2 *Then bring your offering, that which is yours*, Mal. 3. 10. *bring your Tithes, that there may be meat in my houſe*: And let this be done,

1 Chearfully, 2 *Cor.* 9. 7. the Lord loves a chearful giver, eſpecially in this caſe, 1 *Chron.* 29. 16, 17, 18. that is of Gods giving, and is a ſingular mercy where it is.

2 Faithfully; do not withdraw any of what is Gods due, let there be meat in my houſe, let it be as the caſe needs. I might urge and move to this duty by conſidering,

1 *That it is the only way now to preſerve Pure Worſhip and Ordinances. God is trying this Love, it is far more like that your want of Love to the Houſe of God will endanger your loſs more than the hatred of the Enemy.*

2 *It is a way in which you moſt honour God with your Eſtate, which is your Duty*, Prov. 6. 3. 9.

3 It will manifeſt your real benefit by Ordinances, and they are bleſt to you, 2 *Pet.* 2. 3. *Job* 23. 11, 12. that any love they will be at coſt to enjoy.

4 Let not *Heathens* and Superſtitious Perſons out do you in their falſe way; will you not ſhow as much eſteem to that God hath Inſtituted? as men will to what they have invented? if true Chriſtians you will.

5 *It will turn to your ſpiritual advantage*, Rom. 15 17. Gal. 6. 7. *It is Spiritual Trading, and your exchange and turning will be of Earthly Commodities into Spiritual, braſs into gold.*

7 Nay it ſhall be your advantage to outward proſperity, and that is the Argument in the Text which *I* ſhall a little enforce.

The Lord calls you to prove and try him, whether he will not be as good as his word, and promiſe, you are willing to try other means

means if from skilful and faithful men; try and prove the Lord.

There are three ways men do try and prove the Lord, but one good one that is here intended.

1 *By ſinful ways, whether he will be as good as his threatning: ſo Flagitious Sinners try him every day*, Deut. 29. 19.

2 *By diſapproving and deſpiſing the means God appoints for our Good*, 1 Cor 10 2 ſee Num 21 6 Iſai 7 12

3 *There is a Proving of him by Obedience to his Command, and in that way expecting the good of his Promiſes, and this is a way God would be proved, and in which way he hath abundantly approved himſelf* Joſh 23 14 *Yea hor confidently* Joſhua *aſſerts* that *God had never failed in any thing he hath promiſed*, Jer 2 5 *the Lord challengeth that Nation to charge him if the could of any failure on his part.*

1 To further your willingneſs to truſt him and believe, you have not only his faithfulneſs engaged, but the Lord obligeth his power, and ſhews how able he is to make good his word, whatever he promiſeth, for he is the Lord of Hoſts.

All Creatures are at his Command and are bleſſings or curſes; as they are Commiſſioned by him, and are abſolutely under his Rule and Government; therefore you have no reaſon to queſtion the fulfilling what he promiſeth.

2 That he is as willing as able, he ſatisfies in this, by his free engagement of himſelf to Obedience in this thing.

Mal: 3. 8. 9 Let us then prove the Lord in way of Obedience to this Command, eſpecially when he hath freely engaged himſelf by ſuch Encouraging Promiſes.

As 1 *That he will open the Windows of Heaven, this is the firſt Promiſe: that is, he will give abundance, or plenty of the fruits of the Earth.*

Gods ordinary way of bleſſing his people, is by ordering and governing ſecond cauſes, which he hath ranked in their order, and

ſet in ſubordination each to other, of which he hath the ſole command, they are all his Hoſt, and among theſe the Heavens have the chief place, *Hoſ.* 2 18, 19, 20. when there the Lord promiſeth plenty of outward bleſſings, he doth it in this way, the Earth ſhall hear the Corn, the *Heavens* the Earth, and the Lord his people; ſo that the opening Heaven, implies the fruitfulneſs of the Earth, when that gives full and ſeaſonable ſhowers and benign influences; the Earth will yield its increaſe as ſubordinate to them: Its an Hebrew Phraſe and Figure for giving plenty of Showers, and here in mercy not in Judgment, as *Gen* 7.11 but in fulneſs of mercy to his Land and People, and withholding, is called a ſhutting heaven, the cauſe of Famine, and giving Rain the opening of it, *Rev.* 11 6 & this the cauſe of Plenty, and the Lord himſelf he explains it, and Pours out a bleſſing, that there ſhall not be room enough to *receive* it, the like we have, *Hag* 1. 17, 18. and upon the ſame account, yea and hath given proof of his faithfulneſs herein, 2 *Chron* 31 5, 9, 7, 10 As ſoon as *Hezekiah* that Eminent Reforming Prince did provide for the maintainance of the Levites, and they brought their Tithes to Gods Houſe, the Lord bleſſed his People. *It* was the firſt Fruits did ſanctifie the Lump; the Excuſe and Plea of people, is that they are Poor, and their Land doth not yield its increaſe.

But whence is it, but for withholding Gods due, Hoſ 1 8 *put into a Bag with Holes: the Turks have a Proverb in their juſtice to man, that if an Aſper detained, or taken from another be in their bag, it will make an hole in it, this is true in iniuſtice to God.*

But if you pay your Quit Rent to your great *Landlord,* you will find him a beneficient one, *Prov.* 3. 9. honour the Lord with your ſubſtance, and your barns ſhall be full, paying his reſerved due, is that honour by which you acknowledg him the great Proprietor and your dependance on his favour.

The other Arguments you look over with your harveſt minds, here methinks you ſhould be fixt, that this is the only way to thrive in outward bleſſings, *Joel* 2 24, 25. 26. if there be Repen-

pentance and Reformation of this Evil, *Mat.* 6. 32, 33. ſeek firſt that is, to have chief reſpect to Chriſts Kingdom, and theſe things ſhall be added.

Obj. But temporal promiſes were indeed ſuch as God did fulfil and deal with the Nation of the Jews in, but under the Goſpel he fulfills even thoſe more ſpiritually.

Anſw. *It is true, to believers perſonally, it is ſo, and outward mercies are promiſed more conditionally, ſo far as Gods Glory and their beſt* good may *be promoted.*

But to a Communitie and a Body of his People, and as ſuch, ſo he doth fulfil outward Promiſes literally in the way of their viſible obedience, as moſt ſuited to them in their Community.

The ſecond Promiſe is, the Rebuking the Devourers, that they ſhall not deſtroy the fruits of the earth, when ſecond cauſes have concurred to make the earth fruitful, and there may be the faireſt appearance of great increaſe, the Lord can take it away in the ſeaſon, ſend his Meſſengers and Army to gather in your Harveſt, Hoſ. 2. 9 and that is a ſorer Judgment; this the Lord threatned this year: And it is credibly Reported, that a Perſon in one of theſe Colonies was bleſſing himſelf in that appearance of a great Harveſt, and ſaid, now ſhall I pay my Debts and get afore-hand, for I ſhall have a full Crop, and am free from paying any thing to the Miniſter; the Lord ſent theſe Devourers upon his fields, and deſtroyed his vain hopes.

But if God hath his due, he promiſeth that as a gracious Reward of their Obedience, theſe ſhall be Rebuked, they ſhall not deſtroy their fruits, *Iſai.* 65. 23, 24, 25. ſhall not plant for others but themſelves, they ſhall enjoy the fruits of their own labour, *Jer.* 2. 3 When *Iſrael was holineſs unto the Lord* he ſuffered none

none to injure them, and when your Eſtates are ſo, they and you ſhall be under Gods Protection, *Iſa.* 54. 13.

3 As the iſſue of all, you ſhall be bleſſed to a Proverb; yea, your Land ſhall be deſirable, God will delight in it, and dwell among you in and with his Holy Ordinances, and have Communion with you in them, where you eſteem and delight in them, and others ſhall delight in it, and deſire to dwell there as ſeeing God among you, *Zech.* 8 *ult* Take hold of the skirts of a people under *Gods* apparent & viſible bleſſing, this is the way to true Felicity on earth; if you do it in true Love to God and his Houſe, *Pſal.* 144. 14, 15. as abounding in all outward bleſſings, ſo in ſpiritual and eternal. Oh then try the Lord and prove him by this, and ſee if he make you not a people ſo happy that all Nations ſhall call you ſo, Deut 33 29 *Happy Iſrael who is like thee, a People ſaved by the Lord.*

FINIS.